

## **Continuum of Care Narrative**

### **Homelessness Objectives**

- Provide a variety of housing options, with services, for homeless individuals and families. Support the development of housing at appropriate sites, at a scale that ensures neighborhood compatibility. Ensure the provision of adequate on site services.
- Prevent extremely low and low income families and individuals from becoming homeless.
- Address emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless individuals and families with children.
- Help homeless persons, including persons with special needs, make the transition to permanent housing and independent living.

### ***Continuum of Care Objectives***

- To sustain and expand efforts to prevent homelessness, so that as few as possible individuals and families become homeless.
- To maintain and expand access of homeless persons to programs and services which can meet their basic human needs, so that to the extent that they are willing to accept such assistance, every homeless individual and family has, at a minimum a safe place to sleep, food, clothing and necessary health care.
- To maximize the number of homeless individuals/families who, with the help of resources available through the Cambridge Continuum of Care, are able to obtain housing and develop the necessary skills, resources and self-confidence to sustain that housing and maximize their self-determination.

The Cambridge Continuum of Care continued to be an active planning entity for homeless service planning and coordination. Monthly meetings were attended by service providers and consumers to identify needs and gaps in available services. The City was the lead agency for the SuperNOFA application and used the monthly meetings to gather input and set priorities. McKinney Supportive Housing Program funds were contracted out to local sponsors. There were 28 active Supportive Housing Program contracts and one active Shelter Plus Care contract under the aegis of the Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP), and another Shelter Plus Care contract under the aegis of the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) during FY 2002. They provided for services such as: transitional housing, permanent supported housing, supported employment, housing placement assistance, field-based case management, legal assistance, representative payee services, drop in services, and street outreach. The 2001 SuperNOFA submission resulted in awards totaling nearly \$1.7 million in December of 2001 for a range of housing and supportive services, including a new permanent supported housing project, two new supportive services projects, and funding for implementing a Continuum-wide HMIS (homeless management information systems).

On June 21, 2002, the City submitted another SuperNOFA (results pending) requesting over \$1.8 million for a new permanent supportive housing project and renewal of 14 transitional housing and/or supportive services projects and 2 Shelter Plus Care programs.

As described in that SuperNOFA application, over the course of FY 2002, the Cambridge Continuum operated 379 units of shelter and transitional housing for homeless individuals and 37 units for families. Starting from a base of 48 units of permanent supported housing (PSH) for homeless individuals and 8 units for homeless families, we used McKinney funding from two SuperNOFA applications to help bring 8 new units of PSH for individuals on line; another 9 units currently under development are scheduled to open in April 2003. Over the course of the year, Continuum providers helped 131 homeless individuals and 49 homeless families transition from shelter or transitional housing to permanent housing.

**Direct Services: the Cambridge Multi-Service Center**

The City's Multi-Service Center (MSC) provides homelessness prevention activities, assistance securing housing, legal services to help maintain tenancy and related services to individuals and families at risk of becoming homeless. In FY 2002, prevention staff funded with State and local dollars (see below) helped over 400 at-risk individuals and families avoid homelessness and remain in their homes.

**City funds :** \$382,380, including \$197,880 for personnel, \$75,000 for rental assistance to at-risk and homeless persons, \$52,000 for purchased legal services for clients, and \$57,500 for other expenses associated with operation of the Multi-Service Center.

**CDBG funds:** \$75,415, including \$57,400 in staff salaries

**Housing Assistance Program** (State Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) funding through a contract with CAPIC of Chelsea for homelessness prevention and housing search assistance for families): **\$192,500**

The Multi-Service Center employs two staff for a 26-bed men's transitional housing program; FY 2002 funding for this program derived from a contract with the **Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA)** for **\$92,828**